

**MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF BIG LAKES
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
May 3, 2007**

Minutes of the Municipal District of Big Lakes Special Council Meeting held at the M.D. Administration Building in High Prairie, Alberta on Monday, May 3, 2007, at 10:00 a.m.

PRESENT WERE:

Reeve: Myler Savill, Joussard
Deputy Reeve: David Marx, Prairie Echo/Salt Prairie
Councillor: Alvin Billings, HP East/Banana Belt
Violet Campiou, Faust
Ray Dupres, Enilda/Big Meadow
Randy Ehman, S. Sunset House/Gilwood
Ken Killeen, Kinuso
Fern Welch, Grouard

Absent: Ken Matthews, N. Gilwood/Triangle

Administration: Jeff Renaud, Acting C.A.O.
Gerald Loewen, Treasurer
Gilles Lussier, Sup't of P.W.
Gary Braithwaite, Ag. Fieldman
Pat Olansky, Community Development Officer
John Gould, Fire Chief
Cory Bronson, Peace Officer
Sharon Strang, FCSS Director
Amanda Backs, Recording Secretary

CALL TO ORDER:

Reeve Savill called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

**OVERVIEW OF 2007
ASSESSMENT IMPACTS
AND MILL RATES:**

Mr. Loewen advised that the total assessment for 2007 was \$1,505,817,390. The total assessment showed a growth of \$182,028,930 (13.75%) from 2006.

Mr. Loewen reported that the proposed mill rates remained the same as the interim budget resulting in a total municipal levy of \$15,017,894.

The municipal mill rates were proposed as follows: Residential – 4.78, Farmland – 4.78, Non-residential including linear except electrical generating – 10.73, Non-residential including electrical generating – 10.73, Machinery and Equipment – 10.73.

Council reviewed a 2006 municipal mill rate comparison between various municipalities and considered potential impacts with changes in the mill rate.

Mr. Braithwaite joined the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

**REVIEW OF 2007
CAPITAL BUDGET, OPTIONS
AND APPROVAL:**

Mr. Loewen proceeded to review the changes made from the Interim Capital Budget to the Final Capital Budget beginning with the Eight Year Municipal Services Building Plan.

Fire Chief Gould distributed the results of the Request for Proposals for construction of the proposed Municipal Services Facilities. Mr. Loewen noted that the total cost of construction was split evenly over two years in the draft final budget.

Mr. Loewen further noted in the Eight Year Municipal Services Building Plan that the M.D.'s contribution of \$100,000 towards the High Prairie Fire Hall renovations was moved up a year to 2008 based on discussion between Mr. Renaud and the Town Manager.

Council was provided with copies of correspondence dated April 24, 2007 from the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing detailing the M.D.'s eligibility under the Municipal Sustainability Initiative. Mr. Loewen indicated that the municipal services facilities would be eligible for funding for core capital projects. He noted that the core funding amount for 2008 was left the same as 2007 in the plan but potentially could be more.

Council reviewed the results of the Request for Proposals which included deductions for proposed cost savings. Deputy Reeve Marx suggested that an independent study is necessary to look at the current situation and consider future needs of the M.D. fire departments.

A discussion ensued on the difference in the estimates to the bid price and the option of building only one facility or the possibility of locking in the prices to complete all three facilities over two years. Fire Chief Gould stated that the Request for Proposal included a completion date of late 2008.

Councillor Campiou questioned the feasibility of locating smaller emergency trucks in the hamlets as opposed to the existing equipment. Fire Chief Gould advised that the small trucks are not safe to fight structural fires and do not meet standards for fire fighters. Councillor Dupres added that he has been advised that the existing fire halls do not even meet fire regulations and need to be brought up to standards and fire codes. He noted that the M.D. ran into cost overruns with renovations at the Jousard facility.

Council reviewed the building plans and discussed proposed uses for the second floor multi-purpose room. Fire Chief Gould indicated that the costs associated with the second floor are included in the final bid prices. Discussion continued on wheel chair accessibility.

A break was taken from 11:12 a.m. to 11:26 a.m.

2007-09-346

correction:

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR BILLINGS that the M.D. proceed with construction of the three municipal services facilities in Enilda, Faust and Grouard with a 2008 completion date *at a cost of \$703,623 - Enilda, \$695,623 - Faust and \$718,623 - Grouard for a total of \$2,117,869.00.*

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Councillor Billings noted that Council did not consider revenue from the sale of the three existing fire halls and land.

2007-09-347

MOVED BY DEPUTY REEVE MARX that administration carry out the appropriate disposal of the old fire halls in Faust, Enilda and Grouard upon completion of the new municipal services facilities.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Council reviewed the funding schedule for the Municipal Services Facilities and discussed recovering additional costs in 2008 from taxes or under the Municipal Sustainability Initiative. Mr. Loewen noted that funding under the Municipal Sustainability Initiative will go to deferred revenue until allocated to a specific project.

Mr. Lussier proceeded to review changes from the Interim Capital Budget within the supportive schedules for the 2007 Bridge Repairs/Construction Projects, 2007 Special Road Projects, 2007 Water Management Projects, and 2007 Water and Wastewater Upgrades.

Mr. Lussier advised that construction on the Salt Prairie Tower bridge will be proceeding this year. Additionally, repairs to the McGowan Creek bridge was included in 2007 with the vast majority of the costs being paid for by insurance. Repairs and construction at Deep Creek and Little Miami were advanced to 2008.

Mr. Lussier indicated that the most significant change to Special Road Projects reflects more accurate figures for the Gilwood Road grading project with the tender closing this week. He noted that the tender came in higher than anticipated, and overall an additional \$700,000 in funding is required. Another \$200,000 will be provided by the province under the bridge file portion of the project and the remainder of the funding is shown as coming from the General Transportation Reserve.

Mr. Lussier advised that it appears as though Peavine Metis Settlement will be proceeding with the award of tender for the Peavine Road grading. As such, the M.D.'s portion along Range Road 163 will also proceed. He noted that the schedule has not been updated to include the recent provincial Resource Road funding.

Mr. Lussier reported that intersection improvements at the Spruce Point Park Road and Highway 2 was removed as the project will be tendered in the fall with construction in 2008.

Mr. Lussier further reported that intersection lighting at Grouard and Faust will proceed with tender and construction in 2007. Funding at Grouard is 100% commitment by Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation. Mr. Lussier proposed that the M.D.'s portion at Faust come from current year taxes and Hamlet Street Assistance funding.

Mr. Lussier noted that Alberta Environment has indicated funding for the SH 749 / SH 679 flood mitigation project will be available in 2008 rather than 2007. Mr. Lussier added that the

Sucker Creek Drainage Channel Rehabilitation has been updated with the tender amounts. The project will be funded almost entirely by Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation.

Mr. Lussier noted that the 2007 Water and Wastewater Upgrades schedule has been adjusted to include Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation funding for the Faust reservoir and on-line analyzers.

Mr. Lussier provided an update on plans for construction of the Kenzie and Beamish farm access roads and the Range Road 94 connector road. He added that the tender for the Township Road 740 connector road along the Sucker Creek Drainage project came in less than budgeted. As such, the schedule was adjusted.

The meeting recessed for lunch at 11:54 a.m. and reconvened at 12:26 p.m.

Mr. Loewen reported that the Town of High Prairie has indicated that the purchase of a new fire tanker has been deferred due to lack of space in the High Prairie fire hall. Concern was expressed with regard to fire response by the Town in certain areas of the M.D. without a water tanker. Council requested that Mr. Renaud look into the matter with the Town Manager.

**REVIEW OF 2007
OPERATING BUDGET, OPTIONS
AND APPROVAL:**

Mr. Loewen reviewed with Council the changes from the interim budget to the final budget in Operating Revenue and Expenses. Revenue from property taxes was increased by \$854,958.00. The total 2007 Operating Budget presented to Council was \$30,793,747.

Funding was included in the budget to proceed with the installation of GIS/GPS equipment in some of the fleet units. Council will consider proposals from suppliers at the next meeting.

Council discussed the structure for compensation and recognition of volunteer fire fighters. Fire Chief Gould is to conduct a survey amongst other municipalities prior to the next Public Works Committee meeting.

A brief discussion took place with regard to funding for communications towers. Mr. Renaud advised that a response is included in the next council agenda to his correspondence regarding the Alberta First Responders Radio Communication System and the use of multi-purpose towers. Mr. Renaud suggested that even if the province constructs the system, it will not occur in this budget year.

Reeve Savill recommended that the funds for Agricultural Advisory Committee member honoraria remain in the budget but administration does not have the authority to proceed with disbursement as no final decision has yet been reached.

Council noted that the community grant funding was not adjusted as per the revised policy.

Reeve Savill put forth a request on behalf of Councillor Matthews that Council allocate between \$300,000 and \$600,000 over the next 3 to 5 years to contribute towards the purchase of CT Scan equipment for the new High Prairie hospital. Council discussed the request focusing on responsibility for health services and the possibility of reassigning the grant under the Canada-Alberta Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund from the proposed transit system. Council determined that it was premature to set aside funds in this budget.

Council discussed the funding request from the High Prairie & District Golf Course.

2007-09-348

MOVED BY DEPUTY REEVE MARX that a one time contribution of \$10,000 be provided to the High Prairie & District Golf Course.

CARRIED

A break was taken from 1:40 p.m. to 2:02 p.m.

Council reviewed the adjustments to the budget made by Mr. Loewen in terms of community grant funding.

Discussion ensued with regard to the proposed mill rates.

2007-09-349

MOVED BY DEPUTY REEVE MARX that the 2007 mill rates be approved as follows: Residential – 4.00, Farmland – 4.00, Non-residential including linear except electrical generating – 11.25, Non-residential including electrical generating – 11.25, Machinery and Equipment – 11.25.

CARRIED

2007-09-350 **MOVED BY COUNCILLOR DUPRES** that the 2007 Capital Budget be approved as amended.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

2007-09-351 **MOVED BY COUNCILLOR CAMPIOU** that the 2007 Operating Budget be approved as amended.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

2007-09-352 **MOVED BY COUNCILLOR EHMAN** that the 2007 final budget surplus be allocated to the Roadway Surfacing Fund.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**REVIEW OF 2007
PROPERTY TAX
BYLAW # 17-2007:**

Bylaw No. 17-2007 to authorize and establish property tax rates for the year 2007 was presented to council for first reading.

2007-09-353 **MOVED BY COUNCILLOR CAMPIOU** that Bylaw No. 17-2007 be approved for first reading as presented.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

2007-09-354 **MOVED BY COUNCILLOR MARX** that Bylaw No. 17-2007 be approved for second reading.

CARRIED

NEXT MEETING: The next regular Council Meeting will be held on May 9, 2007 at the M.D. Administration Building.

ADJOURNMENT:

2007-09-355 **MOVED BY COUNCILLOR DUPRES** that the meeting adjourn at 2:29 p.m.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Myler Savill, Reeve

Jeff Renaud, Acting C.A.O